

Appl. No. : **09/957,447**
Filed : **September 19, 2001**

REMARKS

This is responsive to the Examiner's Office Action mailed June 9, 2004. Applicant has hereby amended Claims 1, 11, 13, 21, 33, 39, 50 and 52-54, canceled Claims 10, 32, 34-38 and 49, and added new Claims 59-94. Thus, Claims 1-9, 11-31, 33, 39-48 and 50-94 are pending in this application.

A listing is included herein above with the status of all claims and the text of all pending claims. The specific changes to the amended claims are shown by strikethrough for any deletions and by underlining for any insertions.

CLAIMS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-9, 17-31, 33-48 and 56-58 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 1,717,745 to Tismer in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,984,740 to Ikeda et al. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's characterization of the cited references and, thus, with the grounds for the rejection. However, in order to advance the application to allowance (as this application was filed close to 3 years before the mailing date of the first Office Action), Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 21 and 39, has canceled Claims 34-38, and has written several of the allowable dependent claims into independent form. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the original and other claims in one or more continuing applications and/or at a later date.

Independent Claim 1

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of original dependent Claim 10 which the Examiner has indicated as being allowable. Claim 10 has been canceled and Claims 11 and 13 have been amended to establish dependency from Claim 1.

Claims 2-9 and 11-20 depend from Claim 1, and each recites a unique set of features not taught or suggested by the prior art. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 1-9 and 11-20 are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 21

Independent Claim 21 has been amended to include the limitations of original dependent Claim 32 which the Examiner has indicated as being allowable. Claim 32 has been canceled and Claim 33 has been amended in light of the amendment to Claim 21.

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Claims 22-31 and 33 depend from Claim 21, and each recites a unique set of features not taught or suggested by the prior art. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 21-31 and 33 are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 39

Independent Claim 39 has been amended to include the limitations of original dependent Claim 49 which the Examiner has indicated as being allowable. Claim 49 has been canceled and Claims 50 and 52-54 have been amended to establish dependency from Claim 39.

Claims 40-48 and 50-58 depend from Claim 39, and each recites a unique set of features not taught or suggested by the prior art. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 39-48 and 50-58 are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 59

New independent Claim 59 is substantially the same as original dependent Claim 16, which the Examiner has indicated as being allowable, rewritten in independent format. New Claims 60-76 depend from Claim 59, and each recites a unique set of features not taught or suggested by the prior art. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 59-76 are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 77

New independent Claim 77 is substantially the same as original dependent Claim 55, which the Examiner has indicated as being allowable, rewritten in independent format. New Claims 78-94 depend from Claim 77, and each recites a unique set of features not taught or suggested by the prior art. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 77-94 are in condition for allowance.

DRAWINGS

The Examiner objected to the drawings for including free hand lines. Applicant believes that the Examiner is referring to the informal drawings filed on September 19, 2001.

Applicant submitted nine (9) sheets of new formal drawings along with the response to Missing Parts Notice on December 17, 2001. Applicant also resubmitted the subject formal drawings via facsimile along with the Status Letter mailed June 26, 2003.

Enclosed herewith is another copy of the nine (9) sheets of formal drawings. Accordingly, Applicant requests the Examiner to withdraw the drawing objections.

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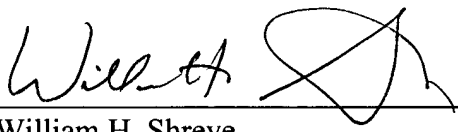
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested. If further issues remain to be resolved, the Examiner is cordially invited to contact the undersigned such that any remaining issues may be promptly resolved. Also, please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: Sept. 9, 2004

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